

# CATAWBA-WATEREE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

## News Release

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### **C-W DMAG Heartened by Gradually Improving Drought Conditions**

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) yesterday advised its members that basin drought conditions continue to show improvement and concluded that the basin can continue to accommodate up to two days a week of outdoor water use without significant negative impacts on water supplies.

“Although still below normal, stream flows and ground water recharge are now showing real signs of improvement,” said Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator.

The CW-DMAG noted that, while the Catawba-Wateree Basin continues in drought conditions, recent widespread rains, Duke Energy’s voluntary limited releases and continued water conservation by customers are holding the region’s water supply at a steady level. Local water suppliers will provide guidance regarding any temporary restrictions specific to their jurisdictions.

“Even with the improvements, it’s important that we continue to adhere to smart water use principles as even now we’re looking ahead to spring and the return of renewed heavy watering demands,” said Kevin Greer, Hickory’s Assistant Public Services Director.

Reservoirs remain at or above target levels for this time of year due to recent rainfall and continued conservation. The CW-DMAG will continue to review drought conditions regularly and re-evaluate recommendations as needed throughout the winter months.

### **Drought and Weather Indicators**

In arriving at its recommendations, the CW-DMAG reviews the area’s major drought indicators along with the National Weather Service’s predictions of future weather trends.

The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) map shows the majority of the basin in normal to “moderate drought” conditions.

The [long-term trends for groundwater](#) levels continue to show gradual improvement, even though they remain below normal for this time of year.

The [six-month average of area stream flows](#) has improved to just over about 60 percent of the historical six-month average and has recently moved into Stage 2 LIP drought level.

The [reservoir storage index](#) holds steady at above target storage levels and remains in normal conditions.

[Rainfall](#): To date, 2008’s rainfall over the basin has been about 7.5 inches below normal although some areas, like Charlotte, have seen more, and some, like the upper parts of the basin, have seen less. The National Weather Service is predicting below average precipitation through March. December is expected to end with near average precipitation.

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) was formed to regularly review the drought status and to recommend and coordinate needed actions for the CW-DMAG members. It also reviews the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) and recommends possible improvements to Duke Energy. Normally scheduled to meet once a year, the CW-DMAG has received weekly drought status reports since late summer 2007 and has met as a group at least monthly. CW-DMAG members include the area’s public water suppliers and several large industrial users that withdraw water from the Basin, NC and SC agencies, the US Geological Survey, and Duke Energy. The CW-DMAG and the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) are outcomes of Duke Energy’s relicensing process for the Catawba-Wateree Hydro Project. The LIP will become part of Duke Energy’s New License for the Project to be issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

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